

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

ENGLISH NATION.

Saturday, January 26. 1706.

I Have in the two last *Reviews*, brought the History of our fashionable Extravagancies down to the present time ; let it be Originally Luxuriant or what it will ; I cannot say it would be prudent, to reduce Habit, or Customs in Apparel to any stated Form ; no, nor altogether to Suppress the Variety and Liberty we give to our Fancy, to guide, change, and direct our Customs in Apparel ; what may be said to the thing as a Vanity, or Criminal Luxury, indeed I do not determine here ; but speaking of Trade, Abstractedly consider'd, I am sure I am in the right, that a Limitation of Fashions, would be Ruinous and Destructive, not only to the particular Tradesmen, whose Employment lay in some Manufactures that were more than ordinarily affected by it ; but to Trade in

General, to the Gross of the Consumption, and to the General Expence.

From hence 'tis plain, that in *Scotland*, in *Spain*, *Portugal*, and other Foreign Parts, where their Habits are National, known, constant, and without or with but small Variation ; they never arrive to any considerable Magnitude in Trade ; the reason is plain, every one knows what to wear, Ascertains his Expence, and wears Garments to their due Extents ; the Cloths thrown by in *England*, not for their being worn out, but merely for their being out of Fashion, is incredible, and perhaps are Equivalent to the general Cloathing Expence of some Nations.

And this is a very Good Proof of the Justice of the Complaint of our Mercers, Lacemen, and other Shop-Keepers, whose
Cafe

Case I have a little consider'd, against the frequency and continuance of Publick Mourning.

The Excess of that Unhappy Humour, for I can call it no other, was grown up to such a degree, that it was in a fair way to blow us all up in Trade, and for some Years together, we had such frequent and continued Publick Mournings, that *Black* seem'd the Universal Mode, and all the Trades which depended upon Fancy, Fashion, and Gayety of Habit, began to be Threatned with a kind of Banishment, or being *Voted useless* in the Nation.

Some have had the Vanity to say, it was a Modest Decent Garb, would prevent a great deal of Pride and Vanity, and the Luxuriant Excesses of the Age would receive a great Blow by it; and the Wise Arguments of a certain Gentleman, while the Committee of Parliament Examined this Case, were very significant that way; I confess, if our Pride and National Errors, lay wholly or chiefly in the Fashions of our Habits, something might be said, but as we see the same Pride, Vanity, and Folly, in the Black Garb of a seeming Mourning, and the Evil not a jot Cur'd, it would be a *Novelty of Nonsense*, to keep the Vice, and lose the Trade too; I cannot but therefore Asquiesce with the Case of the Tradesmen, own the Grievance to Trade is intollerable, and merits the Consideration of the Government; and tho' some of the following Reasons are included in the Petitioners Case, deliver'd to the House of Commons, yet I cannot think it improper to Repeat them; to preserve the real heads of the Grievance, as the true Grounds of its being Redress'd.

I do not say these Heads contain all the Reasons, why a Regulation of Publick Mournings should be made; but as these are the most Essential Arguments, I believe they carry their own weight in them; and after they are consider'd, I shall proceed to Examine, what may be the most proper Remedies of this Mischief.

1. These Mournings have of late been more frequent, and of longer Continuance than ever was known or practis'd; and the

Humour daily encreasing, and the Prospect of its Continuance too great, the Grievance, which, *when seldom happening*, was but small, is become disastrous to Families, destructive to Trade, Ruinous and Intollerable to the Poor.

2. These Mournings are particularly destructive to some Trades more than others, and no equivalent Advantage to any; whereby they become the more a Grievance. A General Blow to Trade is felt by all the Parts, and every one bears their Share with the more Ease; but this entirely distresses some particular Manufactures, and is not at the same time advantageous to others, being in it self a Lessening the General Expence, which is the Life of Trade.

3. The Woollen Manufactures worn in these Mournings are so small, compar'd to the Detriment it is to other Branches of Trade, That it is not worth Naming; *On the other hand*, The Lessening the Consumption of Silk, Silver, Thread, Hair, and other Foreign Goods, for which our Woollen Manufactures are exported, makes it plain, that these Mournings are in their Consequences fatal to the Woollen Manufactures in General.

4. The respective Trades depending upon the Common Customs of Dressing and Fashions in Apparel, are exceedingly distressed, and in part ruin'd, Multitudes of Flourishing Families reduc'd, and a General Obstruction or Embargo laid upon their Employments.

5. 'Tis a most irreparable Damage to the Tradesmen and Shopkeepers, on whose Stocks the poorer sort of People are employ'd; who being oblig'd to provide large Quantities of Goods against the usual Season of Trade, by those unforeseen Accidents of Mourning, have all those Goods left on their Hands; the Channel of Trade turn'd from them, and the Demand being quite of another Nature, their Stocks lye dead till their Goods become unfashionable, by which they are unavoidably ruin'd, the Trade it self render'd hazardous and precarious, and Men of Stocks dis-

discourag'd from adventuring to employ the Poor.

6. The Condition of the Poor, who had their Employments and Subsistences under these Trades, is most sad and deplorable, and particularly deserves the Compassion of the Nation, their Trade being lost, to which Thousands of them having been bred up, know not what else to turn their Hands to; the particular Advantage to the Nation by some of those Employments, in setting to work Children very young, Women, and impotent Persons, which cannot be done in other Works, exposes them to terrible Distresses and inevitable Poverty.

7. The Variety of these Trades, and the vast and incredible Number of Poor, who

feel the miserable Effects of this Distress, are very considerable; such as all sorts of Silk-Weavers, Ribbon-Weavers, Silk-Throwers, Dyers and Spinners of Silk and Silver; together with the Merchants trading to *Italy* and *Turkey*, and the Woollen Manufacturers under them; the Fringe and Lace-Makers, Embroiderers, Thread-Men, Bone-Lace-Makers, Mercers, Lace-Men, Milliners, Hosiery, &c. and by modest Computation above an Hundred Thousand Families of Poor employ'd by them, are the miserable Objects to move against this unhappy encreasing Custom, and the Starving Objects of Charity waiting for Redress of so ruinous a Disaster in Trade.

MISCELLANEA.

I Would say nothing bitter in any Observation I shall make upon the Publick Affairs; but who can refrain noting the Behaviour of some Gentlemen upon the Message her Majesty has sent to the House about the Memorial, and the Depositions on the Head pointing at, &c.

A fine way of fixing things upon Mankind, say our Gentlemen, by pointing at them; by which, when a whole Body is pointed at, any one may be meant, it had as good have been said, it pointed at somebody on the Exchange.

Let us come to positive Proof, and bring them to justice; and when there is a legal Conviction of Fact, something may be said to it; but this is all raising Dust to point men out, and make them obnoxious.

To this something may be needful to say; there are *Legal Convictions*, and *Moral Convictions*: Things may be brought to such a Certainty, that every Body may be satisfied, the Fact is right plac'd, and yet no *Legal Conviction* be possible; the Law requires such Proof of Fact, as is by it self and its proper Rules prescrib'd; and a

Man may be so *Guilty*, that the Judge on the Bench, nay, the very Jury themselves, may be satisfied of his Guilt, and yet the Judge, as Judge, who is to proceed according to Law, and the Jury, as Men sworn to go to according to Evidence, be under a Necessity of acquitting him.

And, Gentlemen, if this be not sometimes the Case, what shall we say for those Gentlemen that brought in the Bill of Attainder against Sir John Fenwick? That he was Guilty, no Man made a Question; but whatever Jury had tried him, whatever Judge had been on the Bench, must have acquitted him; because the direct Demand of the Law in Cases of Treason could not be answered, one of the Evidence having absconded.

Upon this, the House suffered the Moral Assurance of Guilt to answer the Legal Assurance, and thought it sufficient to take away that Gentleman's Life.

Now, tho' there will I hope be no occasion for making *Precedents* in this Case; nor am I speaking with relation to judicial Process, yet without doubt a Moral Certainty of